

1742

LETTERS

AND

EXTRACTS OF LETTERS

OF THE LATE

JAMES BRANDWOOD,

(A Murderer in the Cause of Liberty)

OF WEST-HOODHURST, FORMERLY OF EDGEMOUTH,

IN THE COUNTY OF DUBLIN.

It is recommended to give an account to every man that attacks you, of what you have done to 100,000 innocents and men.

L. PEARCE, III. 16.

MARSHFIELD :

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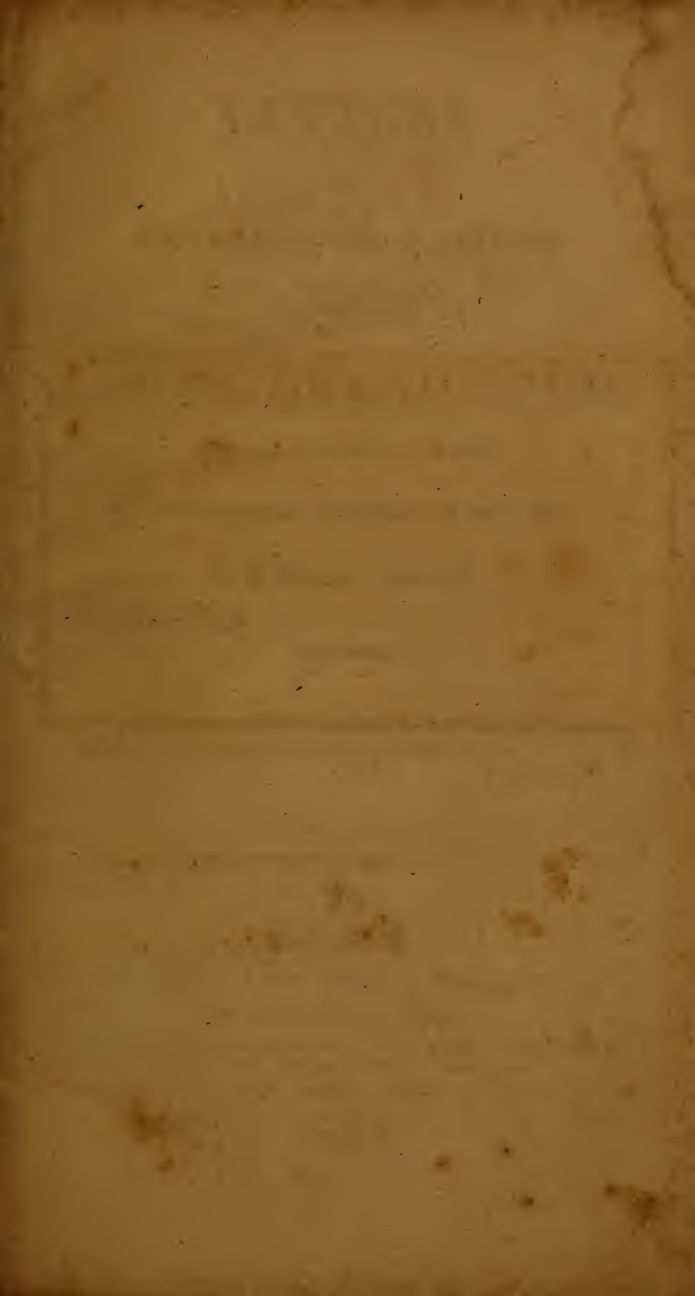
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LETTERS

OF THE

REV. FATHER

JOHN B. WOOD

OF THE

PROVINCE OF MASSACHUSETTS

TO HIS BROTHER IN CHRIST

JOHN

WOOD

1794

NEW-YORK

PRINTED BY J. B. WOOD

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1794

1794

Sam. Agnew

LETTERS

AND

EXTRACTS OF LETTERS

OF THE LATE

JAMES BRANDWOOD,

(A Minister in the Society of Friends,)

OF WEST-HOUGHTON, FORMERLY OF EDGWORTH,

In the County of Lancaster.



“ Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you,
a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

1 Peter iii. 15.

MANCHESTER :

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PREFACE.

IN compliance with the desire of some friends, who think the following letters too valuable to be lost, they are now published, with the hope that they will be both acceptable and useful.

The writer was a plain country man, possessed of a good understanding, but he had not the advantage of a liberal education, which will account for any defects in the composition of the letters.

He was happily favoured, in early life, to see the excellence of the things which make for eternal peace, and through the renewed visitations of Divine love, being convinced of the spiritual nature and design of the gospel dispensation, he separated from those with whom he had previously associated in religious profession, and afterwards joined the Society of Friends.

After having proved the efficacy of the principles in which he most surely believed, he became concerned to recommend them to others; exemplifying the same by a life of self-denial,

christian humility and meekness, and few persons appear to have been more free from the love of the interests of this world, or more dead to its censure or its praise; and a striking feature in his character, worthy to be recorded, was his scrupulous tenderness of the reputation of others, so that his most intimate friends scarcely ever heard him speak to the disadvantage of any absent person.

He many years followed the profession of a land-surveyor and conveyancer, was never married, and when at home, lived most of his life alone, in a retired part of the country; but his christian virtues and unobtrusive deportment, together with his cheerful and instructive conversation, gained him the general esteem of all classes with whom he had intercourse.

He passed the last two years of his life as the inmate of a Friends' family, where the peacefulness with which his mind was evidently clothed, very instructively marked the termination of the days of an upright man; and he frequently expressed his humble yet lively hopes of acceptance with God, grounded solely on the merits and mediation of Christ his Saviour.

5th Month 14th, 1828.

A TESTIMONY

*Of Hardshaw East Monthly Meeting, concerning James Brandwood,
deceased.*

OUR beloved friend, James Brandwood, was the eldest son of John Brandwood, of Entwisle, in the parish of Bolton, in the county of Lancaster, Yeoman, in profession with the Church of England, and was born the 11th of the 11th month, 1739, N.S.

It appears that it pleased the Father of Mercies, to follow him with the visitations of his grace from very early age; as he grew up, he went amongst the Presbyterians, and continued with them until about his twentieth year, when it pleased God further to enlighten his soul by the Spirit of his Son, and deeply to contrite his heart under the view of his fallen state, and of the necessity of experiencing the work of regeneration being accomplished through the operation of Divine grace, shaking all his former building in religion to the very foundation. In this state of mind, he was not able to unite in religious pro-

fession, with any with whom he was then acquainted, and became as one alone.

About this time, repeatedly feeling his mind drawn to attend a Meeting of Friends, to whose principles he was almost wholly a stranger, he went to a small meeting, at several miles distance from his place of abode; and in allusion to which, in a letter to a friend, he says, "In that meeting Divine goodness favoured my soul with a sense of His gracious presence, and the promise of Christ opened to my mind with great sweetness, 'Wheresoever two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.' In this my soul rejoiced, and said, 'this is the truth, this is what I have long been seeking for.'" He appears to have been early made instrumental to the conviction of several others, and was himself admitted into membership with our Society, in 1761; and a meeting was shortly afterwards settled at Edgworth, where he resided many years. Soon after his joining the Society, and for which he was disinherited by his father, he appeared in the work of the ministry, in which service, with the concurrence of Marsden Monthly Meeting, he at different times visited several of the counties of England, and, in 1787, the principality of Wales, in company with James Birch. During many years, he frequently visited the neighbouring meetings of Lancashire and

Cheshire, in some of which he was acceptably engaged in religious visits to the families of Friends. In the exercise of his ministry, he was reverently careful to wait for the renewed openings and authority of the word of life; and his communications were concise, forcible, and comprehensive. About the sixtieth year of his age, this, our dear friend, through a combination of circumstances, appeared to be, in some degree, under a cloud; he became less diligent in attending meetings; and, in 1813, was discontinued as an acknowledged minister, yet he was enabled to bear, with exemplary patience, some deeply trying circumstances, which, during this period, were permitted to attend him.

After some years, it pleased his gracious Lord to dispel the cloud by which his character had been obscured, to reanimate his love to his brethren, and again to engage him in the work of the ministry. Early in 1824, he came to reside in West Houghton, within the compass of this meeting, and some months afterwards was reinstated as an acknowledged minister. Notwithstanding his advanced age, being in his eighty-fifth year, he was diligent in attending meetings, clear and lively in his communications therein, much to the comfort and edification of Friends. During the following year, he visited most of the meetings of Friends in the southern parts of this

county. His humility, meekness, and peaceful composure of mind, together with his innocent and instructive conversation, greatly endeared him to his friends.

About the beginning of 12th month, 1825, our dear friend became unwell, from which time to his close, he was mostly confined to the house. During his illness, he was enabled, at different times, to communicate many instructive remarks and much deeply interesting counsel, a considerable portion of which is here omitted for the sake of brevity. One first day evening, to several young friends, who, according to their usual practice, had come to sit with him, after some time of silence he remarked, "I have this day thought much on the subject of Satan attempting to ensnare the Lord Jesus Christ, and I have been made to believe that he, in the same way, attempts to draw aside visited minds, that are turned Sionward." After enlarging on the subject, he added, "dear young friends, we should not think highly of ourselves, but humbly; and keep low and dependent upon Him, who withstood Satan in all his presentations to ensnare Him, and who will give us strength to withstand also, if we look unto Him for help and are sufficiently dependent upon Him." In the course of the evening of the 26th of 2nd month, after expressing a few short but lively sentences, he said, "A few words have opened to my mind, and I

believe they are in Revelations: ‘And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are all thy ways, thou King of saints.’” After which the whole chapter was read to him, when, without making any remarks, he fell asleep: in a few minutes he awoke, and observed, “I have been dreaming about this song, and it appeared very beautiful, but there are not many who can sing this song, for they must be redeemed from the earth; they must have the white stone and the new name before they can sing it.” He was greatly affected during the whole of this communication.

At another time he remarked, “The Scriptures are full of beauties, if we are but favoured to see them;” and again, “I have been given to see that there is a great deal to be done before the lion can eat straw with the ox.” On the 3rd of 3rd month, he requested that paragraph in the first chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians to be read, in which the apostle declares, “We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God;” on which he exclaimed, “Wonderful and very good:” and, after a few minutes pause, added,

“ This passage dwelt very much upon my mind whilst in bed this morning ;” and he expressed his surprise that any seriously-thinking man, with the New Testament in his hand, could be drawn into that dangerous disbelief and practice of reasoning away the propitiation and atonement of Christ, who was crucified for our sins ;” adding, “ such as are favoured with a sense of their own unworthiness, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin, before God, as they humbly seek unto him for help, come to know that he is also Christ, the wisdom of God, and the power of God.”

On the 20th of the 3rd month, in the course of a lively and interesting conversation, he remarked to this effect ; “ I have indeed lived a great while, and have seen a great deal both of good and evil ; and having, through Divine mercy and forgiveness, got through all, I feel my mind very comfortable, and am thankful I am thus favoured.” Two days before his decease, to a minister of the church of England, who had married his niece, and who, in the course of conversation, remarked, that his uncle need not entertain any doubt of having a place of rest granted him, “ for,” said he, “ you have been a good liver,” our dear friend replied, deeply affected, “ It is not for any righteousness of my own, that I shall gain acceptance, but all my hope is in the mercy of God, in Christ Jesus.” After a pause, though then very weak, he was

enabled to speak, for some time, on the fall of man, and his restoration, through the atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ; "but which," he added, "it is not the believer's duty too nicely to define or explain, but rather to wait for His spiritual appearance in their own hearts." This was the last religious communication of our beloved friend. During the whole course of his illness, he was preserved in patient resignation, always appearing in a sweet frame of mind; indeed his whole conduct, at this period, plainly evinced that the great Physician was graciously pleased to support and console his humble spirit.

On the 23rd of the 3rd month, 1826, whilst sitting in his chair, he peacefully breathed his last, in the eighty-seventh year of his age, having been a minister upwards of fifty years. His remains were interred in Friends' burial ground, at West-Houghton, the 29th of the same month, a large and solemn meeting being held on the occasion.

Signed in Hardshaw East Monthly Meeting, held at Manchester, the 11th of the 1st month, 1827, by many Friends.

The foregoing testimony was read and approved in the Quarterly Meeting for Lancashire, held at Manchester, the 15th day of the 3rd Month, 1827.

LETTERS.

To a Young Man, inclining to join the Society of Friends.

EDGORTH, 11th Mo. 25, 1792.

SINCE the last time I saw thee, I have often had thee in remembrance, and feel an earnest desire for the welfare of thy soul, amidst the many dangers to which in thy situation thou must be exposed: and also find freedom to throw before thy view, some brief hints of my experience in the work of religion, desiring thou wilt accept and peruse the same, as a token of my love and sincere regard for thee. For as the way to life is narrow, and but few are travellers therein, some footsteps of the little flock may be of use to those who follow after: therefore, if thou canst reap any thing from my remarks, to thy furtherance in the way, my end is answered: and I shall rejoice with humble thankfulness on thy account, before Him who is the Father and Fountain of all good.

It pleased the all-wise and gracious God, who gave me being, to follow me by His grace, even from my youth, (though I then knew Him not,) often bowing my mind in serious considerations, that I was placed here as on His footstool for a short space of time, and must ere long remove, to appear before His judgment-seat; also, how short and transient present enjoyments are, compared with the eternal nature of the life to come! whereby my mind was led to conclude, "this world is not my resting-place, the life to come is my home, eternity is the chief end and design of my being."

Thus, in my young and tender years, were desires formed after Heaven, but being unacquainted with the corruption and weakness of my nature in a fallen state, and with that Divine power in Christ appointed for my help, I laboured long as in the dark, without clearly seeing the necessity of regeneration, or the unfitness of my present state, for such a High and Holy inheritance.

Thus running in my own will and strength

from year to year, I heard sermons, read many books, and talked with professors, some said one thing, and some another;—I then began to read the Scriptures more, but alas! they were to me in many places as a sealed book. I prayed often in secret places, and learned to sing; (thinking I was thereby preparing myself to join the Heavenly host;) I talked with religious professors about doctrinal points, and endeavoured to form as just notions and opinions about the coming, life, doctrines, sufferings, and death of Christ as I could, and this I called faith: but this faith not proceeding from the quickening power of Divine grace, but from the workings of the natural understanding, was a dead faith, and could not be an evidence of things not seen, nor work by love to the purifying of my heart, so as to give victory over the various sinful lusts and vanities of this world, but on the contrary, I was abundantly overcome thereby from day to day.

In this condition I travelled long, and was sorely tossed between the secret reproofs of Divine grace in my conscience, and the workings of the adversary, who laboured to persuade me that

all was well with me, yea, much better than with many who were esteemed very religious people; and that considering my youth, I needed not to walk so circumspectly.

In this bewildered manner, I stumbled along until about the twentieth year of my age, when it pleased God, in unspeakable mercy, further to enlighten my soul through the Spirit of His Son, as with the day-spring from on high; whereby I was enabled to see more clearly my fallen and corrupt state, and my sins were set in order before me, appearing exceedingly sinful and opposite to the holy will of God, whose wrath I felt revealed in my soul against sin and ungodliness. In this day all my former building in religion was shaken to the very foundation. In this situation, I cried, “O what shall I do? to whom shall I flee? for in this sinful state I cannot dwell with Him that is Holy.”

The Scriptures now began to be more opened to my understanding, and though I had been told, that by a certain ceremony, which was performed in my infancy, “I was made a member of Christ,

a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven," yet, in the opening of the Scriptures to my understanding, I saw this could not be true; for there I was informed, that the members of Christ were made such by other means, even by His own baptism with the Spirit, as saith the apostle, "by one spirit are we all baptized into one body," and that, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature:" for as he is holy, harmless, and separate from sinners; so those who become united to Him as members of His body, must be fitted for such a union by the sanctifying operation of the Holy Spirit. I also saw that the children of God were such as were begotten of Him through Christ, the incorruptible Seed and Word of God, and born again into newness of life, bringing forth the fruits of the spirit. And that the kingdom of heaven, and government of Christ is within, by the influence of His Spirit, which as a pure principle in his children and people, ruleth and leadeth them in his service. The Scriptures informed me, that those alone who experienced these things, were the true and real church, members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven: all which I

was a stranger to, notwithstanding my baptism and high profession.

I also saw that all my prayers and songs of praise, had been a sacrifice of my own preparing, and offered up in my own vain imagination, in a fallen and unconverted state: and that it was only in and through the Spirit, that God could be acceptably worshipped.

I also saw that all my former faith, was no more than a bare assent of the natural understanding, to certain things whereof I had no evidence, but what arose from the letter of Scripture, and other outward means: whereas, in the opening of the Scriptures, I saw, that he that believeth hath the witness in himself, even the Spirit of Him, who is the author and object of true and living faith, by which the quickened soul receives an evidence of things not seen, and an humble confidence, in the saving power and redeeming love of God through Christ.

I also saw that I had trusted too much in, and been carried about with the changeable doc-

trines of men, and neglected the teachings of the grace and good Spirit of God in my soul, which as a swift witness against evil, had followed me, with inward and secret reproof, even from my infant years; and which I now felt as an axe in the Almighty hand, laid to the root of corruption in my soul, to cut down and cast into the fire; that which was for the fire.

Then was my soul made to experience many things to be cut down and brought unto death, by the power of the Spirit, and this was a day of deep humiliation; not from the voluntary act of my own will, but through the Lord's work; witnessing in my measure the saying of the apostle to be true, "being buried with Him in baptism:" and although all my pleasant pictures of devotion and will-worship were spoiled, yet as some degree of the new life was raised in my soul, a new worship arose, even in faith and love; and cries were raised, though often in solemn silence, through Jesus Christ unto my Father who is in heaven.

As I was thus brought more and more into

stillness, and humbled under the Divine hand, the Light of Christ arose and more enlightened my mind; whereby I saw into the purity of that faith which was once delivered to the saints, and that holy religion, which, through the power of Divine grace, was taught and wrought in the primitive believers in Christ, to their unspeakable comfort and peace in the midst of outward tribulation: filling their hearts with love to God, and one unto another, and inspiring them with gifts for the edification of one another in that love.

As these things opened to my view, a strong persuasion arose therefrom, that it was not my duty to join any of the various professions of religion with which I was acquainted, and I seemed as one separated in heart from them all, and left alone: and if at any time I tried to join with any of them, it brought distress and trouble over my mind. I then said in my heart, "is there no people on earth preserved in the simplicity of the truth, with whom I can unite." Whereupon it came into my mind, to go to a meeting of the people called Quakers, a people of whose principles I had very little knowledge, neither did I

know more than one person of that persuasion ; only I remembered to have heard it said, by way of ridicule and as a taunting proverb, “The Quakers speak as the Spirit moves them,” I thought if this be true they must be right : and being encouraged by repeated drawings of mind towards them, I went many miles to one of their meetings, accompanied by several others, to whom I had in part communicated my concern.

Being sat down in the meeting (which was but small) my mind was seized with great surprise, considering the vast difference between that multitude of words and ceremonies, to which I had been accustomed, and the solemn silence in which we sat : and the breathing of my spirit was, “if this be right, confirm it to me this day.” After some time my mind was brought into more stillness, desiring to unite in the solemn pause, in which Divine goodness favoured my soul with a sense of His gracious presence, and the promise of Christ opened to my mind with great sweetness, (though I had not understood it before) “wheresoever two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.”

In this my soul rejoiced, and said, "this is the truth, this is what I have been long seeking for;" for in His presence was the light of life, wherein I saw my condition and wants more clearly, than ever I had done before. Towards the latter part of the meeting, some testimonies were borne in great simplicity and plainness of speech, but in the demonstration of the spirit: tending to open and confirm my mind in the true sense of that worship which is in spirit and in truth.

The next time I attended the said meeting, my soul was more abundantly favoured with a powerful sense of the overshadowing of the Divine presence; and in that meeting an Epistle from the Yearly Meeting was read, which appeared to be written in true gospel love and care for one another, and to correspond with the practice and spirit of the apostolic times, and seemed like the revival of primitive Christianity; this, together with the sweetness I felt amongst them, and their love and freedom one with another, which I observed, tended much to unite my mind to this people. I then saw it clearly to be my duty, to join in worship with them.

Now as the testimony which God hath given this people to bear, is so contrary to the spirit of the world, they are abundantly despised thereby, and like the christians of old, almost every where spoken against: therefore when I came amongst them, I met with great opposition, both from professors and profane: but knowing in whom I had believed, and that His power is greater than he that is in the world; my faith was strengthened, and my spirit frequently bowed before him for help and support in that day: in which (blessed be his name) I often found His secret hand underneath, enabling me to stand in patience and bear the cross,—even when the enemies of truth shot their darts; and this made me cleave closer to the Rock of my salvation.

But the greatest enemies that I met with, were the remaining corruptions of my own heart, and the many foolish and hurtful lusts and habits to which I had been addicted, by which the adversary of my soul was permitted to distress me very much: insomuch that I cried mightily unto the Captain of my salvation, to arm and strengthen me to make war in righteousness

against the man of sin ; and as I kept close under His banner, in faith and dependance, He was pleased to do this, to my great comfort, for which I have cause always to bless His name, in whose service I remain to this day, and for whose cause I have this testimony to bear : that as I have relied on Him for help, and stood in His counsel, I have been enabled to get the victory ; neither have I wanted any thing that was good, but have been fed with food convenient for me, for which I can do no less than speak well of His name. Not as though I had already attained a complete victory, or “ were already perfect ; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.”

I have herein laid before thee a brief account of my religious experience, and the real ground and cause for the adoption of my present profession ; perhaps some parts thereof may appear strange to thee at first view ; yet, like bread cast on the waters, they may be found after many days. I am persuaded that if thou attend to the dictates of the Holy Spirit in thy soul, as a pure and precious gift from God, which according to

the promise of Christ, doth convince of sin, and lead and guide into all truth; thou wilt experience his goings forth prepared as the morning, and his coming down as the former and latter rain in its season. By this, thou wilt be more and more instructed in the way of life and salvation, and know the softening showers of celestial rain to tender thy heart; that the plant of renown, even the work of Divine grace, may take deep root downward, and bear fruit upward, to the praise of the great husbandman; who I believe is waiting to do thee good; to whose gracious and powerful hand, I commend thee in much love; and remain thy friend,

JAMES BRANDWOOD.

To———, *On War, Oaths, and Gospel Ministry.*

1782.

AT the request of thy friend, I here present thee with my sentiments on the work ———. I have pretty thoroughly perused it, I hope with that candour of mind which such writings deserve, and Christianity requires: several things which he treats of, appear to be right; and in some others he appears to me to err from the truth of the Gospel: by making the doctrines of Christ and his apostles subject to what he esteems the light and law of nature, as a permanent rule; particularly where he considers wars and oaths lawful under the Christian scheme, which appear to me a dishonour to the Christian cause, and a contradiction to the Divine purpose therein.

For if we consider the fallen and degenerate state wherein human nature stands, as appears both by Scripture testimony and the experience of mankind, we cannot suppose that the light

and law of nature, without Divine revelation either mediate or immediate, can be a perfect rule to us; but must in some degree be liable to error; otherwise there had been no need of a further help. And considering that the gracious purpose of Heaven through Christ, was and is to raise man from his fallen state; and by the work of regeneration to cure his degeneracy; by the shedding abroad of pure light in the mind, to enlighten his darkness, and by a communication of Divine wisdom and strength, to enable him to understand the things of God, and to walk in that path which leads to everlasting glory and peace. Therefore to make the doctrines of the Gospel subject to the light and law of nature, appears to me like setting the handmaid above the mistress.

The author attempts to establish the propriety of wars and oaths, as things that are right in some cases, when considered only on the score of the light and law of nature, without taking notice of the evil root from whence they spring. For had man remained in his primitive state of innocence, there had been no wars to be opposed

by war, nor falsehood to be guarded against, by the solemnity of an oath; therefore they both had their origin in the fall. And when this author comes to reconsider these subjects, under the Christian dispensation, not having carefully traced them to their root, he attempts to reason away the force of several clear Scriptures, and to make the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, to bend to the law and light of nature which he supposes he has before established.

If we calmly consider the Gospel dispensation as the outstretched arm of Omnipotence, for the recovery and restoration of fallen man; and weigh the doctrines of the Gospel, and the prophetic declarations of the old Testament, concerning the glory, the excellency and peace of the kingdom of Christ on earth; it appears plainly to be the Divine will, that all those who believe in and come to experience the redeeming power of Christ, should come out of all those things which had their foundation in human corruption, should become so imbued with the virtue and power of truth, and be so brought under the government of the Prince of peace,

and so filled with love to their fellow-creatures, that they should “beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks,” and “not hurt nor destroy;” but as subjects of the kingdom of Christ, which is not of this world, nor in its spirit, they should not fight nor oppose evil by violence and war; but be strong in faith towards God, that he both can and will preserve them so far as shall be for their real good, from the violence of wicked and unbelieving men.

The author doth indeed acknowledge, “that many of the primitive Christians scrupled the lawfulness of war,” but says, “they were not uniform in their opinions about it.” What little want of uniformity there was amongst them in this matter, so far as I have perused the history of those times, appears to be no more than that some amongst them gave way to the prevailing spirit of the world in this respect; as some also did in the case of circumcision and other Jewish ceremonies: which conformity, nevertheless, we ought not to make use of to weaken the Christian testimony against those things, that some, through weakness of faith, gave way to.

But there is a warfare of a higher and more glorious nature, in which the followers of the Lamb are to engage, under Christ Jesus the Captain of their salvation, even the fight of faith against the assaults of the world, the flesh, and the devil: and over these the faithful are to be made conquerors; not by carnal weapons, nor through their own strength as men, but through Him that has loved them, and by such spiritual weapons and armour as He puts upon them. Thus the Christian warfare is to be against that which is the cause of outward wars and fighting, even the corrupt and sinful lust of the flesh, as the apostle James testifies. James, i. 4.

It was, without doubt, under the blessed experience of this glorious warfare, that the apostle Paul testifies for himself and his fellow-believers in Christ, saying, “for though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong-holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every

thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Cor. x. 3, 4, 5.

I fervently wish that the author had been, and all others were who now call themselves Christians, of the same mind with this apostle, instead of pleading for the lawfulness of war under the gospel, and thereby encouraging the powers of the earth to oppose and destroy one another, then might we happily see the spirit of love and universal good-will spread itself over professed Christendom, "nation would no more lift up sword against nation, nor learn war any more."

With respect to the gospel doctrine against oaths, it appears clear if we consider the passage, Matt. v. 33, 34, with its context, that Christ meant not thereby, "to forbid profane swearing in common conversation only," as this writer asserts, but that His design was, that His followers should not swear *at all*: because He first refers to the law of Moses, wherein oaths were both allowed and enjoined for the confirmation of the truth on solemn occasions, and for a binding obligation in case of vows: "ye have heard that it

hath been said by them of old time, thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oath ; but I say unto you, swear not at all, &c.” It therefore plainly appears, that the swearing He here forbids is of that kind which was allowed by the law ; otherwise it would have been improper to have made such a reference : but the law never allowed profane swearing ; therefore Christ could not intend to forbid profane oaths only.

The design of Christ appears to me to be, that by reason of the excellency and power of the Spirit of truth, whereby He would influence his faithful followers, they should no longer continue under the Mosaic law in this respect ; but should let their yea be yea, and their nay nay, as followers of Him who is the truth itself, and who solemnly declares that whatsoever is more than these, (that is yea and nay) cometh of evil ; as if He had said, all oaths and every thing that is more than a plain declaration of truth in words, (as yea and nay) arise from the corruption of fallen nature, and it is My gracious purpose to restore to purity and truth, all those who believe in me.

It appears that the author intended this work to be as a mould, wherein the judgments of young students who are intended for the ministry, might be formed and furnished with speculative knowledge, and fitted for service. This intention appears to me not agreeable to the ancient plan and design of the Gospel, nor likely to produce a ministry consistent with the simplicity of the truth as it is in Jesus. For it evidently appears both by the example and doctrine of Christ and his apostles, that the call of God, through the Holy Spirit, is the foundation of the gospel ministry; and that it is not the province of men to set themselves or their children apart, to engage in that work, upon any supposed qualifications in nature, or acquirements by learning; but that the Lord of the harvest only, should send forth labourers into His harvest; and all that Christians are commanded to do in this affair, is, to pray for the same.

We find that the Author of our holy religion, when he chose His disciples, made choice of those of low rank, and generally unlearned men, in order that the gifts He intended to bestow upon them,

might plainly appear to be neither of man, nor by man, but of God alone; and thereby might shine more clearly to His glory. And although the apostle Paul was greatly accomplished in learning, yet he makes it no part of his qualification as a minister; but humbly declares that Christ sent him to preach the gospel, “not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect;” nor “with excellency of speech,” nor “with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power:” and this is the reason he gives for it, that the believer’s faith should not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God.

The apostle tells us, that when the Son of God had finished the work he came to accomplish on earth; “He ascended up on high, led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men:” and that “he gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ:” thereby shewing, both the great love and care, which the Holy head exercised towards

His body ; and also, that the true spring of gospel ministry, from the highest to the lowest, must be in the Divine gift.

Can we suppose, that Christ is so changeable in himself, or in His love to his people, that He should favour them with the precious gift, the Holy Spirit, for a season, (perhaps an age or two in the primitive times,) to be a leader and guide to all believers, and a living Fountain or spring of ministry amongst them ; and should afterwards so far withdraw this gift, as to leave His church under a necessity to set up academies and schools, in order to qualify with learning and speculative knowledge, to supply the want of this gift ? Does not this intimate, that we apprehend He has either adopted a new mode of raising up ministers in His church, or that His love is waxed cold towards His people, and that, of His own accord, He has left them very much exposed to the guidance of natural wisdom ; either of which would be a high reflection on Him, who is perfect in wisdom, and unchangable in love. But we have not so learned Christ.

I freely acknowledge my esteem for human learning in its place, but where any appear as ministers of the gospel, who evidence by their conduct, that they run in their own wills, or in the wills of others; setting up their natural accomplishments, instead of the Divine gift, declaring that they have not freely received and therefore cannot "freely give;" these bear not the marks of the Lord Jesus, nor dare my soul receive such as His ministers, however consistently with the truth of the gospel they may speak in many respects; but wheresoever the Great Master calls any into His service, He qualifies them for the work, clothing them with evidences that they come not in their own will, but in obedience to His call; having received their gift at His hand, and ministering freely of the ability He giveth; such as these my soul can receive and unite with, desiring that as every one has received the gift, he may minister the same as a good steward of the manifold grace of God.

That some change should happen with respect to miracles, and other things peculiar to the first publishing of the gospel, is very evident from the

Scripture testimony : but that so great a change should take place, as to overturn the primitive foundation laid by Christ, even the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, whereupon the believers rested, and from which the ministry proceeded, and that something arising from nature, should be substituted, appears not consistent with the honour of the Gospel ; for, if admitted as such, the Gospel would, in my view, be reduced, as to the ground of its ministry, much below the law ; whereas, the new covenant is prophesied of as excelling the old, with regard to the plentiful effusion of the Spirit.

The great Redeemer informs us the love of God to man was very great, even as a tender father to his offspring ; and thus he reasons with fallen man, “ If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.” In a sense of this love, my soul has often been humbled before Him, and a prospect opened to my mind ; that if the professors of Christianity would bow their minds, and feel after the Holy Spirit, they would find it manifested in

the secret of their hearts, as a precious pearl or treasure hid in a field. The promise is, "they that seek shall find," and having found the pearl of great price, they would know it to arise as a teacher and witness in themselves; which as it was attended to in faith, would open their understandings, lead them forward in the saving knowledge of God, and finally bring salvation to the soul.

In this the people would witness a passing from death to life, from a state of nature to a state of grace; the church would come up out of the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved, and not on the arm of flesh; and the great Master would favour His family with gifted servants; a living ministry would spring up amongst them; and although there might be a diversity of gifts from the one Spirit, yet all would tend to direct the minds of the people unto God, and "to the Word of His grace." Thus judges would be restored as at the first, and "counsellors as at the beginning:" Sion would shake herself from the dust of the earth, and put on her "beautiful garments" as in the days of old.

Under a full conviction of these things, and of the necessity of such a reformation, I and many others, have found it our interest and duty, to separate ourselves from other professors; and having received Christ as our King, Priest, and Prophet, we are engaged to wait upon God in solemn silence in our assemblies, that we may feel the great King of saints to sway His righteous sceptre in our minds; the great High Priest of our profession, to apply his atonement and intercession to our souls; and to know Him as a prophet to teach us by His grace and good Spirit: yet if He see meet to engage any of His servants and ministers, to speak to the people in His name, or prepare in their hearts a supplication or sacrifice of praise; these things we accept as proceeding from Him through instruments, for the edification and comfort of His people.

Now having been favoured through the abundant mercy of God in Christ, to see into the nature and design of His Gospel, and in my small measure to experience something of its blessed effects, and my understanding having been opened to behold the beautiful order of his house, the

humble and dependent situation of his servants and ministers, both in their formation, and in the progress of their work; I dare not give countenance to any thing which appears as an addition to the gospel plan, or looks like an attempt to improve what the all-wise and perfect hand of God hath established.

The above hints I throw before thy view, without any desire to promote controversy; and, with due respect, remain thy friend,

JAMES BRANDWOOD.

Extract of a Letter, dated 12th Mo. 18th, 1787, addressed to a Friend during a religious visit, to the principality of Wales, in company with James Birch.

“ON our way we passed through a small town called Barmath, where we felt a powerful flow of Divine love towards the people; and having duly weighed the matter that evening, we found our minds engaged in Gospel love to appoint a Meeting in the said town the day following, to

which many of the town's people came, and were serious and attentive ; it was a precious time of favour, and my mind was somewhat uncommonly opened and enlarged in pure love to the people, in some observations on the conduct of Noah's descendants ; who not having faith in the Divine covenant and promise, consulted in their own fallen wisdom, and set about in their own strength to save themselves by building a city and a tower, whose top might reach to Heaven, which so far displeased God, that he confounded their language, and thus their project miscarried ; observing to the people, that although this outward building was thus stopped, the account was left on record for our instruction, and appears to contain a true representation of all the religions in the world, which are not grounded in a living faith, and experience of the Divine covenant and promise of salvation through Christ ; but which being built up in the will, wisdom and strength, of the fallen creature, could not be well pleasing to God, nor answer the purpose of salvation to man, which is of God alone.

“I was led to declare that, like the children

of Noah, in the former part of my life, I had been a Babel builder, engaged in a high profession of religion, in which I thought to be my own saviour, consulting and working in my own will, wisdom, and strength; that I had gathered and formed doctrines, and made bricks, and building and cementing them together by human reason, which I used for mortar, raised a structure of mere opinion which I vainly called faith, and thought thereby to reach to Heaven and take it by the violence and strength of my own hands; but when it pleased the Lord in mercy to confound me, in and by the visitation of the glorious Light of Christ revealed in my soul, my building was not only stopped, but the very foundations being shaken by his mighty power, down came all my building to the ground. Much more was communicated, which time will not admit me now to mention."

To a Unitarian Minister.

EDGORTH, 10th Mo. 10, 1791.

AFTER long delay, occasioned by many other engagements, I have now found opportunity in

part to peruse the books thou sentest me, and herewith return them, acknowledging thy kindness ; I have read them, I hope, with candour and openness of mind, and have paid particular attention to the pages thou pointedst out. As I apprehend thou wilt incline to know my sentiments concerning them, I think proper to inform thee as followeth.

The author of the 'Observations on Man' appears to me to be a very learned person, well stocked with philosophick knowledge, and an acute reasoner : his observations contain many things, especially in the first volume, where he treats of sensation, the generation and association of ideas, and the formation and exercise of our mental power, which I could approve, if he had confined his views to our understanding of natural things. But as he seems to extend his views to things of a divine and spiritual nature, with intent to exclude both the possibility and necessity of the immediate revelation of the Holy Spirit to the mind of man, his observations do not meet with my full approbation ; because such a sentiment appears so contrary to many concurring evidences

in Scripture, and my own experience. Notwithstanding all that I have found in his observations, I yet see a necessity to preserve a distinction, between the means of attaining the knowledge of things natural and spiritual, agreeably to the doctrine of the apostle, 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, “we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom

teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth ; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”

I have also read with close attention———, on the doctrine of Divine influence on the human mind, which on the whole I very much disapprove; for though some of his writings on other subjects, appear to me very agreeable to truth, yet on this subject, he seems like one who speaks whereof he does not know; who runs at uncertainties, and fights like one who beats the air; for I see no execution done, nor any proposition proved; and I must confess, that I admire the explanation which Jesus gave to his disciples, of the Parable of the Sower, much more than this author’s sermon on that subject.

He attempts to explain this parable of Christ, in such a manner, as would make it militate against His express promise to His followers. When it was expedient that he should leave them, as to His personal appearance, He says, John xiv. 15, 16, 17, 18, “If ye love Me, keep My commandments; and I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He

may abide with you for ever: even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."

The author's design in this discourse appears to be, to endeavour to persuade men, that, seeing the Divine Being has vouchsafed to favour some part of mankind with the Holy Scriptures, and some men are engaged, or take upon them to explain these writings to the people; therefore, notwithstanding He has in those very writings, promised the gift and continuance of His Spirit in some measure to mankind in general, and to believers in a more eminent degree; yet, we are not now to expect that he will fulfil this promise unto us, because it doth not agree with this author's notions of the Divine wisdom and rectitude, that God should convey instruction to men, both by application to their natural senses, and the inspiration of His Holy Spirit. However, as the author does not produce any Scripture evidence, either by way of declaration, that it was the

Divine intention to withdraw His gift, and wholly to take away the influence of His Spirit from mankind; or by way of prophecy, that in the latter ages of the world this should be the case; therefore, his attempt to limit and bound Divine favours to men, by what he deems the rules of right reason, must fall to the ground; because the apostle tells us, “that the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of men.” And I still believe, according to the Scriptures, that the Divine promises are not yea and nay (that is, first one thing and then another) but yea and amen for ever.

The beloved disciple tells us, in the introduction to his gospel, that “He (Christ) came unto His own, and His own received Him not: but as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” By this it appears, that all the powers of human nature, both bodily and mental, are incapable of producing this birth; and that it is the immediate work of God. Again,

we find Christ conversing with Nicodemus, and further explaining the means by which this new birth could alone be effected, and enforcing its necessity, saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Again, we find the apostle declaring on the behalf of himself and his fellow-believers, who had experienced this birth or change, by what means it was accomplished: saying, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour." By these and many other concurring passages of Scripture, it clearly appears, that the work of sanctification, by which men come to be made fit for the service of Christ Jesus, whilst in His church militant on earth, and prepared for the inheritance of glory hereafter, is a work of the Divine Spirit: and therefore, to labour to weaken men's faith in the immediate influence thereof, appears like an attempt to

take away the key of the kingdom of heaven. But the promises of Him who cannot lie, still remain firm and immoveable: and the believers have the witness in themselves, the Spirit of God bearing witness with their spirits, that they are the children of God.

In thy letter to me, thou complainest of my manner of quoting scripture, saying, "In the way in which thou quotest thy texts, I think I could prove any thing from the Bible," and that, "the Methodists, Independants, and others, who rely on their memory, rather than on their understanding, and who have studied the Scriptures rather in concordances, than in the Bible itself, detach and sever sentences from their connexions as thou didst." What others may do in some cases, I know not, and therefore must not judge; but with respect to myself I can say, it is my desire to be preserved from any such practice; and as it happens, I have no concordance. My usual method is to read the Bible itself, and often to peruse whole epistles, or several paragraphs at one time; in order that I may more clearly discover the intention of the writers, and

what point of doctrine they intended to illustrate or establish. Sometimes I compare different english translations, and one evangelist with another, where they relate the same facts differently, both as to the words and actions of Christ, the better to gather what He intended thereby. In perusing the parables contained in Scripture, it appears to me proper, first to seek out the intention for which they were spoken, then to mark out those particular parts of the parable which most strongly enforce the subject, giving them the chief weight; and to consider the other parts thereof, as intended to fill up the narrative.

Thou askest in thy letter, if the Bible “is a complete revelation,” and sayst, “if it be, of what use is the Spirit now?” To this I answer, that I have not found in the Scriptures, that they declare (either directly or indirectly) themselves to be a complete revelation, and intended by the Divine will, to supersede the influence of the Holy Spirit. Nor doth it appear to me from the nature of these Sacred writings, nor the manner in which they have been given forth, that it ever was, or now is intended by the Giver of all good,

that they should be considered in that light. Although I would be careful not to exalt them higher than in the Divine providence they were intended to be. Yet I esteem them very highly, and believe with the apostle Peter, that, "prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," and, with Paul, that the Scriptures are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Thou further sayst in thy letter, "the tenor of the old and new Testament is the grand rule." This is a saying I have often heard from persons with whom I have conversed; when I have quoted passages of Scripture to refute their assertions, they have pleaded for a general sense, arising as they said from the tenor of the Scriptures, without attempting to produce any particular parts of those writings to prove the tenor or general sense; which in my view amounts to nothing: because no general sense can be ascertained, but by a summary of particular evidences.

I am no despiser of human learning as thou seemest to suppose; I esteem it an excellent thing, and very profitable to men, if kept in its due place: and in some cases where learned persons have devoted themselves to the promotion of truth, they have been highly useful, especially in translating the Scriptures. But when I see human learning set up as an essential qualification and preparation for the ministry of the gospel, and see persons trained up in learning, on purpose to introduce them into the office of ministers of Christ; such practice appears like an encroachment upon the office and dignity of Christ, as the King of saints, and Holy Head of His church, in the choosing, calling, and qualifying of His own officers and ministērs; which is so abundantly witnessed to in the Scriptures: and I fear this custom has also had a strong tendency to induce some to set up a title to that office and station, whom the Lord never called nor sent; and who thus pervert the right order of the gospel.

Since we were together at —, I have often remembered thee with no small esteem, particularly for the candour and freedom which thou

manifestedst towards me, then a stranger. And I now feel this wish for thee as for myself, that thy mind may stand open to the clear convictions of truth, from whatever source or by whatever means they may arise; that thou mayst be willing to be whatsoever the Lord would have thee to be, without regarding either the applause or frowns of men; and above all, that thou mayst be favoured with a true sight and sense of thy state, as it is in the Divine sight: so that by a deep humiliation under the forming hand of God, thou mayst know as the apostle did, that what thou art, thou art by his grace. In which well-wishing I conclude, and remain thy friend

JAMES BRANDWOOD.

To the same.

EDGORTH, 1th Mo. 7, 1792.

THY letter of the 22nd of last month, I duly received, together with the books; both which I accept as a renewed token of thy friendship and regard: and although the letter in my view,

appears to contain many things much short of the pure gospel truth, and some things repugnant thereto, yet as I have no doubt they are the real sentiments of thy mind, which I hope is yet seeking after truth, I am not discouraged, but my solicitude is increased for thy welfare and improvement in religious knowledge and experience; for which desirable object I take the liberty, in Christian love, to communicate some remarks that have arisen in my mind upon the perusal thereof.

In the first page of thy letter, thou speakst of this religious improvement, saying, "whatever be the supernatural influence of the Divine Spirit, I think thou wilt not deny, that men of learning, of knowledge, of wisdom, of experience, of reflection, of thought, are the best fitted to promote the religious improvement of mankind. If they have the Spirit, the wiser they are, the more useful are they likely to be." It gives me pleasure to see that thou dost not wholly overlook the Spirit, but givest it the first place in the course of thy words: although it is but with doubtful expressions, yet it indicates to me, that

thou hast not wholly lost sight of that Fountain from which all true and profitable learning, that tends to religious improvement must spring; without the sanctifying influence of which, learning will intoxicate; knowledge will puff up; wisdom will be earthly and sensual; experience, dead and fruitless; reflection and thought, unprofitable and vain. I agree with thee, that human learning doth not merely consist in the knowledge of the languages, but in the acquirement of all the wisdom, which man, by natural means, can obtain; and although the Scriptures inform us, that, “the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God;” yet, I do believe, that if the mind be sanctified and guided by the Holy Spirit, human learning may be of use in explaining, applying, and enforcing, the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures; but for want of this, we may with sorrow observe, as great a diversity in religious sentiments among the learned, as among the unlearned part of mankind.

Thou next sayst, “I plead not for any particular order of men; I think a brown coat as respectable as a black one; I admire not the

distinctions of dress, which, fashion has made, which superstition has consecrated:" adding, "perhaps I may think, that by complying in things of small consequence, an influence is secured in things of the greatest importance." Upon which I may observe to thee, that seeing Divine goodness has so far favoured thee in opening thy understanding, to see that the peculiar dresses of those, who take upon them the trade of preaching, are the offspring of vain fashion and superstition; I feel a wish for thee, that thou mayst not despise the day of small things, nor account any thing small which God either forbids or commands; but by faithfulness in the little, mayst be made ruler over more. And that, in the midst of all thy reasonings, thou mayst not act even contrary to reason, by supposing, that by the compliance with some evil, great good may come: for, be assured, as it is in the nature of things for like to beget its like, so that which springs from superstition, can only tend to nurse up people's minds in the same.

Thou next declarest thyself "fully persuaded, that every one who understands the Gospel, has

authority to teach it, and is criminal if he doth not." I think I have good cause to believe the contrary, and that the Christian ministry has a more sacred foundation. For all Christian ministers, according to the language of Scripture, must be the messengers and servants of Christ; labourers in His harvest and vineyard: and therefore must be called, engaged, commissioned and directed by, and receive their wages from Him, agreeably both to the true order and nature of things, and the testimony of the Scriptures. For, when Christ observed to His disciples, that the harvest was plenteous, and the labourers but few, He does not direct, that all who understood and could perform harvest work, should come and labour therein, but He said, "pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest." Again, He commanded His disciples to tarry at Jerusalem, until they were endued with power from on high: and a little before His ascension, further said to them; "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

We find that Paul and Timothy declared to the church at Corinth, and to all the Saints in Achaia, saying; “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God: who also hath made us able ministers of the new Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.” Paul also compares the church of Christ to a human body, consisting of many members, which members have different offices. But thy assertion as above, would make the church to be a monstrous body, all mouth and no ears; against which Paul thus reasons with the Corinthians. “If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him.” Thus we see, the Lord doth not leave the members of His church to choose their places and offices, not to presume upon their supposed understanding of the gospel, to teach it; for undoubtedly the ministerial office under the gospel, is as sacred as the office of the priesthood under the law; concerning which it is written, “that no man

taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron."

In thy fourth page thou sayst, " I think thou canst not reasonably expect a summary of particular evidences, against the doctrine of the miraculous influence of the Divine upon the human spirit, it is sufficient to examine the passages, produced in support of the doctrine; they who deny, need only disprove." I should indeed have expected thee to produce such a summary from the scriptures, but that I never could find any thing of that sort therein; and therefore it would be very unreasonable to expect impossibilities. And although in some cases of dispute, it may be sufficient to disprove, by clearly shewing from the context, that the passages produced in support of a doctrine, were spoken or written with another intent and meaning; which if it was done completely, would amount to as full a decision of the matter in dispute, as a summary of evidence to the contrary from the same authority. But I do not perceive by thy letter, that thou hast done so, but slightly slips over many of the Scripture evidences I produced

in support of the doctrine of the influence of the Holy Spirit, by intimating, that the word spirit is in some places used, and to be understood in a lower and different signification; and that thou judgest the word spirit has this meaning, in some of the passages I produced in evidence, without attempting to shew from their context that this is the case.

I freely acknowledge as I have done before, that the word which we read in Scripture for spirit, in the original, signifies breath or wind, and is used as a figurative expression; and also, that the word spirit, in some places of the Scriptures is used in the senses thou allegest, but that gives no licence to understand it in those senses, in passages wherein the context clearly shews to the contrary; for instance, Paul saith to the Thessalonians, "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless," whereby I understand temper, soul, and body. And to the Corinthians he writes, "Glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are His: by which I understand body and soul. These and many other passages, which might be produced,

clearly shew, that the word spirit is used for the soul, and even for the temper of man, as thou allegest.

But let us take a view of some of those passages which give evidence to the said doctrine, and see by their context, whether the word spirit does not require to be there understood in a higher and different meaning. First, we read, that on the last day of the Jewish feast, Jesus stood and cried, “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink, he that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water,” which the evangelist tells us, “this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” When He had informed His disciples, that He should go away from them, as to His bodily presence, and of the troubles and persecutions which would attend them; by which He perceived that sorrow had filled their hearts; He was graciously pleased, for their encouragement, to renew His promise, that the Holy Ghost should be given, saying, “Nevertheless, I tell

you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement: of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and ye see Me no more; and of judgement, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now: howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you." Again, when He had forwarned them, that they should even be brought before governors and kings for His sake, and for a testimony against them, He says, "when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what you shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak; for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." When He made comparison of

a vine and its branches, under the care of the husbandman; in order to instruct His followers in the nature of that connexion, union, and dependance in which they must stand and be unto Him their Holy Head, in their incumbent duty to be fruitful in good works, and in the support of his ministry and testimony amongst men; in order to make them fully sensible of the means whereby such union should be preserved, and such good fruits brought forth, He said, “when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me. And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning.” At another time He said to His followers, “I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more: but ye see Me; because I live, ye shall live also.

At that day ye shall know, that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you."

I have been the more full and particular in quoting the above passages, lest by referring to the text, thou mightest too slightly pass over any of the necessary parts and connexions, (as thou thinkest some others are apt to do,) desiring that thou wilt seriously consider every part, and the strong connexion throughout the whole: and then I hope thou wilt be enabled to see, that something more is meant and intended by the Spirit of truth, the Comforter here promised, than, as thou sayst in thy letter, "a personification of the influence of the Divine providence, in the Christian religion." For how can we suppose, the natural influence of the Christian religion could so far affect the unbelievers, who, in a preceding quotation, are called the world; many of whom do not so much as know any of the leading principles of Christianity, as to reprove them of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement. But if God pour forth His Spirit in some measure upon all flesh, according to His promise; and thereby as with the finger of His own hand,

write His law in their hearts, we may easily conceive how men, even in the darkest parts of the world, may be thereby reprov'd, and even convinc'd of sin, of the nature and necessity of righteousness, and know judgement to pass over their minds, for transgression against His Royal law.

I wish thee also to observe, that the thing promised in the aforementioned pages, is spoken of as a thing distinct from the minds of men, and expressed by the appellations, He and Him; and the subjects to whom the promise is made, and on whom it should have effect, are expressed by the terms, ye, you, the world, &c.: which clearly shews and preserves the distinction between the thing promised to be given, and the subjects to whom it should be given, and upon whom it should operate.

Much might be advanced in favour of this doctrine, from other parts of the Scriptures, and particularly from the apostolic writings, where they to whom these promises were made, declared from their own experience, and the experience

of their fellow believers, the fulfilling of these promises, and the blessed effects thereof; both with respect to their sanctification, preservation in holiness, and their direction and assistance in the discharge of their ministry, and other duties in life: but that I may not swell my letter beyond due bounds, I shall only refer thee to some places for thy perusal at leisure; hoping that when thou observest the concurrence of their experience, with the promises of their great Lord and Master, it may excite thy mind to seek after the same for thyself. For the promise was not only to the apostles and primitive believers, but unto them, and to their children, and to all that were afar off, (either with respect to distance of situation or time;) whom the Lord God shall call. "Lo I am with you always to the end of the world." See Rom. v. 5, 8, 11, 13, 14, 26. 1 Cor. vi. 11,—ii. 9, 10, 11, 12. 1 Cor. xii. 13. Eph. iii. 16. Eph. i. 13, 14. Gal. iv. 6. Tit. iii. 5, 6. 1 John, ii. 20, 27. 1 Peter i. 10, 11, 12.

Thou remarkest, "that much is said of the powers communicated to the church at Corinth," and sayst, "I am disposed to conclude they

were then proved to be too great a treasure to be intrusted to mortals in general, who would be very apt to misapply and abuse them."

I think we should be very careful, not to find fault with that plan, which infinite wisdom hath seen meet to adopt and pursue, for the furtherance of the gospel, and the edification of His people. I do not observe, that when Paul wrote to the church at Corinth upon this subject, he in the least called in question, the reality of these great spiritual gifts, or remarked them as any thing out of the common plan of other Christian churches at that day: but only labours to convince them, that as these gifts proceeded from the Divine Being, who is a God of order, and not of confusion, so they should be careful to exercise His gifts in that comely order which is consistent with His nature, the honour of His cause, and the edification of His church. For instance, he says, "let the prophets speak two or three, and let the others judge: if any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophecy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits

of the prophets are subject to the prophets ; for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints." By this I understand, that in the church at Corinth, there were many prophets and teachers, and that they spoke from an immediate revelation ; and that he here cautions them, that if any thing should be revealed or opened in the mind of one, whilst another was speaking, he ought not in any forwardness of his own spirit, to deliver it immediately whilst the other was speaking, but to wait in patience till the first had ceased ; so that all improper forwardness in their own spirits might be kept down, and in subjection to the sacred work, office, and dignity of the prophets.

Thou intimatest as thy sentiment, "that the influence of the Spirit upon the apostles, at the day of Pentecost, only gave them a knowledge of the different languages of those to whom they were to preach the gospel." I am free to acknowledge myself of a contrary sentiment ; because it is observed on that occasion, that they not only spoke their several languages, but that they declared the wonderful works of God ; and that Peter, who

appears to have been the most eminently engaged in the ministry at the time, bore such a testimony in the demonstration of the spirit and of power, that the like effects of a sermon, have not appeared since that time.

Thou sayst, "I am far from saying, that the Bible contains a complete revelation, but I do seriously think, it contains all the revelation which men have ever received."

It appears to me far more consistent with the goodness and wisdom of God, to allow of an immediate revelation of His Spirit to guide into all truth, than to suppose that He, whose works are perfect, should only favour men with a revelation that is incomplete. And also seeing there were more than two thousand years from the creation to the time of Moses, who wrote the first part of the Scriptures, in which time, and particularly before the flood, it is said that the wickedness of men was very great, which necessarily implies, that the Divine will was so far revealed to them, as related to their duty, otherwise their actions could not have been deemed

wicked ; for where no law is made known, there can be no transgression. And it is intimated in Scripture history, that the Holy Spirit strove with them ; and that Noah was a preacher of righteousness to them.

With respect to the inspiration of those who wrote the Scriptures, as thou hast touched on that subject, I am free also to communicate my sentiments thereon. I view Divine inspiration, as given to men in different measures and degrees, much in the same manner as some distinguished it by these three terms ; viz. Plenary, Objective, and Superintendent inspiration. From the first, I believe the doctrinal parts of Scripture have chiefly proceeded ; from the objective inspiration, I believe the prophetic parts (especially those contained in the old Testament) have had their origin, by objects being in a spiritual and miraculous manner presented to the view of the mind : and the gospels and other historical parts of the new Testament, I believe to be written under superintendent inspiration ; whereby the memory and understanding of the Penmen were revived and strengthened, and superintended and guarded

from running into error, as to the sense and meaning of the matter in hand, but still left at liberty to express the sense and meaning in words agreeably to their own style and method; which, to me accounts for the variations amongst the evangelists. I can truly say, I desire that thou mayst be preserved, on the one hand from embracing error, and on the other, from dealing in the false traffic of unfelt truth; and from soaring too high in speculation; and that thou mayst know salvation through Christ, "who of God is made" unto His people, "Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption," is the desire of thy friend,

JAMES BRANDWOOD.

Letter of Admonition, to a Friend.

EDGORTH, 3rd Mo. 13, 1792.

THE great kindness wherewith thou hast treated me for many years past, calls loudly upon me, not only to acknowledge the obligation, but also to attempt such acts of friendship as are in the way of my duty, and lie in my power; and although I am not in a situation which enables me to return the kindness in the same way, yet according to my apprehensions of duty, both to the Father of all our mercies, and to thee, I feel something to communicate, which, as it comes in true friendship, mixed with that love which is without dissimulation, I hope thou wilt accept and duly weigh it in the same.

As I supposed thou wouldst be gone to Lancaster when I came to our Monthly Meeting, I thought it best to write what was on my mind, and leave it for thee on thy return. I have for some time past and especially of late, felt a growing painful concern of mind on thy account, arising from an apprehension that thou art

greatly departed from that tenderness of spirit, and that inward attention of mind to the instructions and sanctifying operations of Divine grace, wherewith I have reason to believe, thy soul hath been highly favoured in days that are past; and that thou art turned aside from that path of humility, seriousness and sobriety of life, which it is the duty of all to walk in; and by which every believer in Christ should adorn his holy profession.

I may also inform thee, that the last time I was at ———, three friends, well-wishers to thee, each of them, separately, spoke to me, expressing their concern on thy account; I did not enquire, nor did they appear to be disposed to speak of particular matters of conduct which gave them concern, (except that one of them mentioned something of improper conduct at ———.)

Since I was last at thy house, I have often considered thy case and situation; and there have appeared to me four things, as principal causes of hurt to thy mind, and which I earnestly desire thou wilt consider and carefully watch against.

First, an aspiration of mind to appear in the genteel ranks of life, and to have authority in the world, which I believe has led thee into some unprofitable pursuits, such as shooting, &c. which have not only gratified and strengthened the inclination to appear as a gentleman, but which I believe has a certain tendency to harden the heart; and also wastes much precious time, which might be employed to good and valuable purposes, especially in such a large and growing family as thine; it also sometimes opens a door to get acquaintance, and become familiar with such, whose company and conversation is of a hurtful nature.

The second is an eagerness for company, and a hasty attachment to persons before due trial of them; this, I believe, has tended to entangle thee with those, whose allurements have insensibly drawn thee into great levity, and sometimes into intemperance.

The third is an undue freedom in the use of strong liquors, which is injurious to the body, discomposes and benumbs the mind, and has

also a strong tendency to ensnare in many other evils, and in particular, I think it has been a means of drawing unprofitable company to seek to associate with thee, both when from home, and at thy own house, to the great disquietude of thy family.

The fourth is an irreverent and unguarded liberty in making quotations from, and remarks upon the Holy Scriptures, in common conversation; nay, even censuring some matters mentioned therein, and marked with Divine approbation; which practice I believe has a tendency to darken and bewilder thy mind, and greatly to unfit it for receiving profit in religious meetings, and also is of hurtful consequence to others; and I am afraid will be greatly injurious to thy children and family, by weakening their esteem for the Sacred writings, and other serious subjects pertaining to the Christian religion.

I earnestly desire that for thy own soul's safety and salvation,—for the preservation and good of thy children,—for the comfort of thy near relations and friends,—for the honour of God and

the prosperity of His cause, thou wilt bow thy mind in humility to wait for the appearance of Divine Grace, that, by the light thereof, thou mayst clearly see whether these things are so; and whilst the day of mercy is lengthened out, be instructed and enabled to “live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world;” that so thou mayst be restored to a state of fitness for Christian society whilst here, and be prepared for happiness for ever hereafter; which is the fervent prayer of thy friend,

JAMES BRANDWOOD.

To a Person formerly a Unitarian Minister, and who subsequently became a Member of the Society of Friends.

EDGORTH, 8th Mo. 1, 1791.

IN a measure of that love which has heretofore united us, I salute thee, having often had thee in remembrance since we parted, with fervent desires for thy preservation, growth, and establishment in the pure Christian truth.

My desire is not so much for thy increase in speculative knowledge, as that thou mayst dwell

in the valley of humility, where the Heavenly dew rests long and preserves the mind in a tender state: there thou wilt experience the forming power of that hand which "makes all things new," and brings the believing soul into child-like simplicity, dependence, and obedience, which makes meet for the Kingdom of Heaven. I feel much sympathy and concern for thee, in considering the conflicts thou wilt probably have to pass through, in a situation where there are but few outward helpers. But, my dear friend, be not dismayed, either by the distant prospect, the near approach, or even with the real experience of trials and sufferings; because, strong is that arm which is stretched out for thy salvation: and as thou abidest in His love who has visited thee, He both can and will make all things work together for thy good. Gold is tried in the fire, and thereby brought to a state of standard purity, fit to receive the impression of the king's image; but the trial of a Christian's faith, in the preparation of the soul, to bear the heavenly image of the King of kings, and to inherit glory, is far more precious than that of gold, though it may pass seven times through the fire. Think it not strange, therefore,

if thou meetst with many and great trials, for the Lord will have a tried people, both for their own necessary refinement, and the manifestation of His power and glory to the world.

Experience hath taught me that sufferings tend to empty us of self-love and self-sufficiency, strip us of our own righteousness and carnal wisdom, and lead or rather drive us to an entire dependance upon Him who of God is made Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption, to his faithful people; and although I have not so far attained as some of those bright morning stars, who could say, they gloried in tribulation, yet have I been so much inured to sufferings and affliction, that they are become like my proper element; and I have learned, that patiently to abide under them has been profitable.

I hope thou art favoured to see more and more clearly, that the real work of religion is an inward, heart-felt work, and that it is a vain thing to look for salvation from the barren hills and mountains of high notion, speculation, and empty profession.

I often feel thankful that thou hast been strengthened so far to give up to the Heavenly visitation, and break off from the friendships of a delusive world; and earnestly desire that thou mayst yield obedience to every clear discovery of duty, though in ever so small things to human appearance, by which thy mind will be prepared for further and greater discoveries of the Divine will, thine eye will be preserved clear, and favoured with light to discover the baits and snares of the enemy.

JAMES BRANDWOOD.

To the same.

EDGORTH, 1st Mo. 15, 1792.

ALTHOUGH in my letter to thee, I did not request an answer, yet, as it is now long since I heard directly from thee, I am desirous to know how thou farest; for I may assure thee, that thy welfare in every respect lies near to my heart, and of late thou hast been often the subject of my thoughts; therefore, feeling my mind at this time measurably covered with that love which flows

from the Fountain of all good, I salute thee with these lines. As the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, it raiseth our affections to Him who first loved us, and also extends our love to those especially, who we believe are begotten of Him. I am fully satisfied that thou hast been singularly visited, by the movings of this heavenly love, which love proceeds from Him in whom is everlasting strength, who has broken down the gates of brass, and burst the bars of iron asunder, in order to open the prison doors, and free thy captive soul from that state of bondage in which thou wast formerly held and entangled. O mayst thou stand fast in that liberty wherewith Christ maketh free; and prize this thy visitation, as "the acceptable year of the Lord," when the Lion of the tribe of Judah arose in his saving strength for thy deliverance, and opened thine ear to hear His voice, who saith "to the prisoners, go ye forth, and to them that are in darkness, show yourselves."

Mayst thou be deeply humbled under His purifying hand, and know Him not only to take off thy fetters, but also thy prison garments, and wash thee with pure water; that so he may clothe

thee with innocence, wisdom, and strength, and lead thee forth in that path which is cast up for his ransomed ones to walk in. The Lord spake by His servant the prophet, saying, "I will bring the blind by a way that they know not, I will lead them in paths that they have not known, I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight: these things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." If the great Shepherd of Israel should lead thee in a very strait path, as he hath done many others, be not thereby discouraged, nor stumble at his cross; because it is necessary for thy refinement: but look unto Him who has visited thy soul, who has been the author and alone is able to be the finisher of thy faith. "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it;" but it is only strait and narrow to that corrupt part in us which must be mortified and put off, to make us meet for the kingdom of Heaven.

The Lord spake by the prophet, for the encouragement of His children in all succeeding times, "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name, thou art Mine.

When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee : when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.”

When Jesus was about to leave His followers, as to His bodily presence, for their encouragement in the Christian warfare He left them this promise, “ Lo ! I am with you always ; even to the end of the World ; ” and His beloved disciple, who no doubt had an experience of its fulfilment, writes thus, for the encouragement of the faithful in trying seasons, “ Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the World.”

The victory which the great Captain of our Salvation gives to His faithful people, is often through patient suffering. And I can say, from my own small experience, that the Lord has sometimes removed mountains of opposition, and made a way where there seemed to be no way ; at other times I have known that where there seemed to be a way open, walls of opposition have been permitted to arise : yet this I have to

acknowledge, that both these dispensations have been in mercy and perfect wisdom, for the exercise of my faith, and that I might be made more deeply sensible, that, without the assistance of the great Master, I could do nothing.

JAMES BRANDWOOD.



To the same.

BERTENSHAW, 6th Mo. 25, 1792.

THY last letter to me was, indeed, very acceptable ; because it bears the evidence of love, and contains an account of thy perseverance in the humble path of truth.

It is also pleasant to hear that thou hast begun to keep a school : an employment suitable to our abilities and taste, if kept in moderation, is salutary both to body and mind. I am especially pleased to find that amidst all thy employment, thou adherest to the practice of self-denial ; by this thou wilt be well grounded in the first rudiments of the School of Christ. Men may

take up and bear something like the cross of Christ, and appear to practice a good degree of righteousness of life; yet, if self is not denied and mortified through the power of Divine grace, it will arise into dominion, and have its ascendancy even in their best things. Although I should greatly rejoice to see thy enlargement in the Lord's way and time; yet I also rejoice to observe thy deep wading and close exercise of mind in thy present situation, believing that the Lord will thereby lay thy foundations more deep and sure upon that Rock whereon he buildeth His church; and on the perusal of thy late letter, I had in remembrance that gracious declaration, "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires: and I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones." "Behold," the Lord saith, "I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgement I will also lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies,

and waters shall overflow the hiding place. Thus the great Master-builder of His church redeems Zion with judgement, and all her converts with righteousness; yet the "bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgement unto truth, and not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgement in the earth, and the Isles shall wait for His law."

It has often been the supplication of my soul on thy account, that thou mightst be effectually humbled under the operation of that hand which creates anew in Jesus Christ; and of latter time, when I have looked towards thee, and considered the gracious dealings of Divine love in thy visitation, I have often had in remembrance the case of the blind man at Bethsaida, who was brought by others to Jesus; how Jesus took him by the hand, and led him out of the town, how He anointed his eyes once, whereby He gave him sight, though not clear and perfect; "he then saw men as trees walking," but upon the second anointing, he saw more perfectly, and clearly discerned men as men.

But my dear friend, though the old inhabi-

tants of the land may appear numerous and potent, be not discouraged ; only be careful to abide in faith, in patience, and obedience to thy Holy Leader, and thou wilt be enabled, though by little and little, to drive them out and possess the promised inheritance.

The hint contained in thy letter, about proposing thyself for membership in our society, doth not at all surprize me, because I well know the strong draft of that love which leads to such a union. It is good in all such important undertakings, to weigh things well and count the cost. I have known some who, through giving way to too much eagerness of mind, have made such an application too soon ; some of them have been accepted and others refused ; but their minds not being duly prepared it has tended to their hurt. I have also seen some others, who through a mean opinion of themselves, have let in so much discouragement, that they have kept at a distance from the society ;—they have lost strength, and getting into a state of ease and supineness, have never come forward agreeably to the gracious design in their visitation. But, my dear friend, attend closely to

the teaching of the Holy Spirit in thy own mind, and to the advice of solid and judicious friends with whom thou mayst converse on that subject; be watchful also over thyself, that thou dost not take any offence from seeming discouragement; nor, on the other hand, be unduly influenced by any apparent kindness; and I hope thou wilt find such a concurrence between the voice of the Spirit and the Bride, that thou wilt be rightly directed in this important concern.

I find something to rest with me whilst I am writing, which I seem most easy to mention to thee, as cautionary advice, before I conclude; not because I see any bias in thy mind, which seems to make it particularly necessary; but not being wholly ignorant either of human weakness, or of the devices of the adversary, in much love I point out to thee a rock, whereon, some convinced persons have appeared to me to split: (viz.) when by the power of Divine Grace, they have been brought to a good degree of reformation of life, the adversary of man's peace, not being able to prevail in his attempts to lead them into open evil, has been successful in causing

them to watch for faults in others : thus, their minds have been drawn from their own proper exercise, and not having attained to true humility of soul, a rash and censorious zeal hath arisen and prevailed in them, which has darkened their minds, hindered their growth, and tended to shut up their way in the minds of faithful friends, and even sometimes caused disquiet in the Society. May others' harms make us beware, and mayst thou be watchful, and above all things " study to be quiet, and do thy own business."

But my dear friend, whatever be thy employment, be watchful against carnal reasoning and worldly fears, which enslave the mind and work death; and endeavour to live in faith, and lean upon the breast of the Beloved, who has visited thy Soul.

JAMES BRANDWOOD.

To the same.

EDGORTH, 6th Mo. 27, 1793.

Thine of the 6th instant I duly received, the contents whereof are indeed very moving, both with respect to the awful and sudden change that has taken place in thy family, and also touching the reflections that have passed in thy own mind on the occasion : on both which accounts, I feel a near sympathy with thee, and in a sense of His love who has often shewed me “wonders in the deep,” and out of darkness brought forth light, a desire and hope arise in my heart, that so far as sorrow covers thy mind under the present dispensation of Providence, that which is of a godly sort and tendeth unto life, may and will have the ascendancy over all worldly sorrow. And I think I have the right authority to revive in thy remembrance this language, “Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.” May thy faith and patience be strengthened, to wait upon the Lord. Let thine eye be singly turned to the Father of Mercies, who, though He see meet to permit affliction and trials to come upon His

people, doth not afflict willingly ; but His eye is still over them for good, and as they abide in His love, He both can and will make all these things to work together for that blessed end, loosening their minds from earthly enjoyments, and bringing them nearer to himself.

I have been favoured with tolerable health for several months, but often much stripped of that comfortable sense of Divine goodness, which makes glad the heritage of God, and which, I am apt to think, many others more fully enjoy. We are not called to live by sight and enjoyment, but often times by faith, the evidence of things not seen, the shield that defends the soul from assaults, and supports in pinching seasons. O this precious Divine gift! mayst thou and I be careful to look to that Source from whence it springs ; then, every where, and in all the varied dispensations of Providence and in grace shall we be instructed, and learn how to abound without exaltation, how to suffer need without repining, and find a place of rest and support, in the arms of that love, which, when shed abroad in our hearts, unites us to our Holy Head, and extends its

influence amongst the members of the body, though outwardly separate one from another. In a measure whereof I salute thee, and, with dear affection, remain thy friend,

JAMES BRANDWOOD.

Extract of a Letter to a Clergyman of the Church of England.

TURTON, 1st Mo. 1, 1823.

It has been much on my mind during some weeks, to communicate to thee some of my thoughts, as unto one whom I love; hoping thou wilt excuse my freedom in so doing.

Since I last saw thee, I have often been led to consider the gracious dispensation of the gospel of life and salvation through Jesus Christ; and in considering the source, the nature, the design, and blessed effects thereof, it has appeared to me wonderful, and that the prophet speaking of Christ, might well say, "His name shall be called Wonderful."

When we consider the greatness of that

love towards man, even in his fallen and degenerate state, which was in the Divine mind; and that it was from the overflowings of this Fountain, that the gospel dispensation had its origin,—when we consider the spirituality of its nature, and the pardoning love of God to man, through Jesus Christ, His life, doctrines, sufferings and death, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, and all to accomplish man's salvation. Oh! when my mind has been led to consider this, I have said, well might the angels sing upon the occasion of the birth of Christ, “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men.”

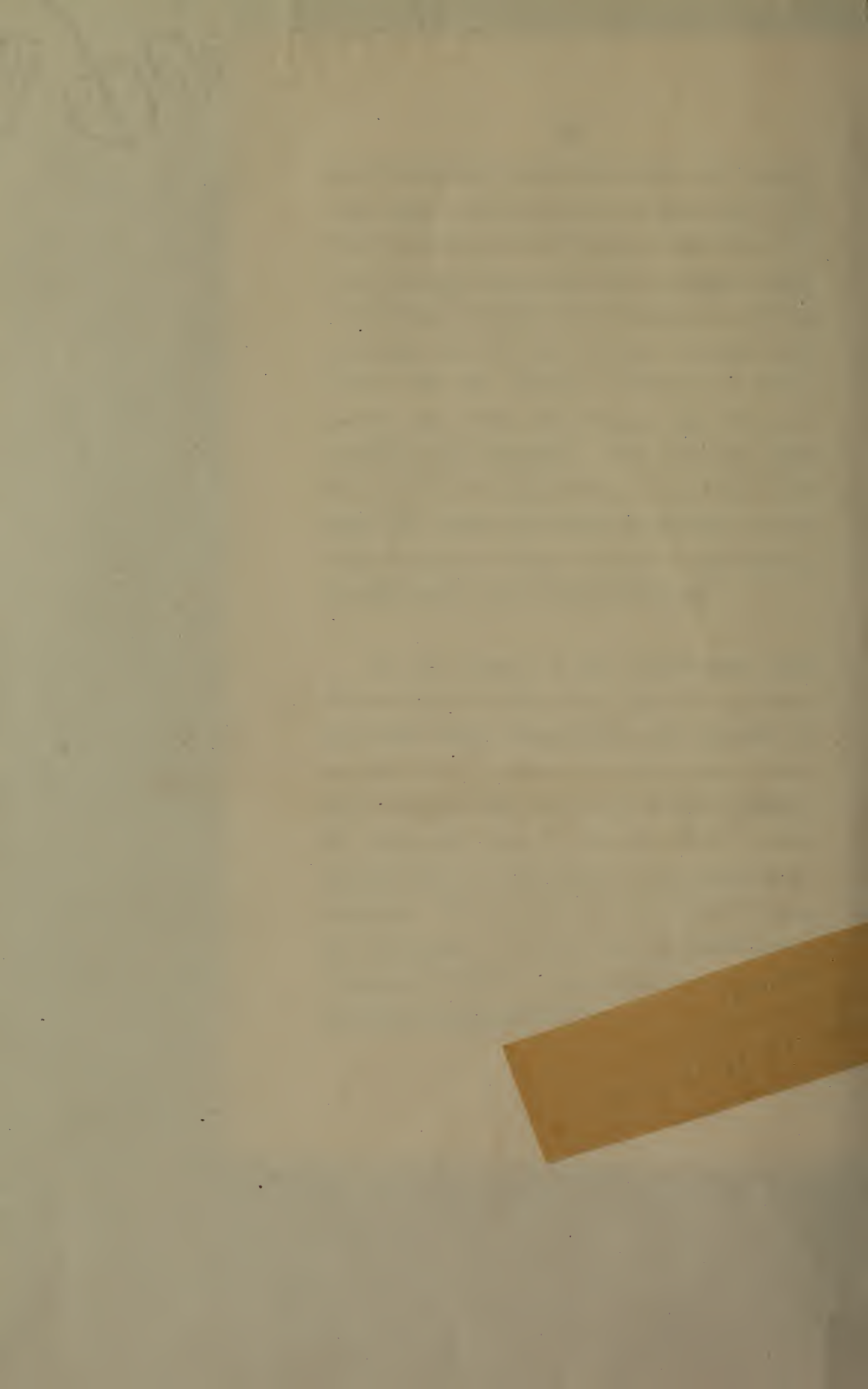
As the source of this dispensation was Divine love, it could not be intended to produce any other effects, than such as are agreeable to its own nature, a return of love from man to God, and amongst men, love one towards another. We find such were its blessed effects in the primitive times of Christianity; The apostle John declares, “We love him because He first loved us;” and again, “we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren,” and Christ enjoins his followers, not only to love

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ERRATUM.

Page 54, line 18, read thus:—

Rom. v. 5. Rom. viii. 11, 13, 14, 26.



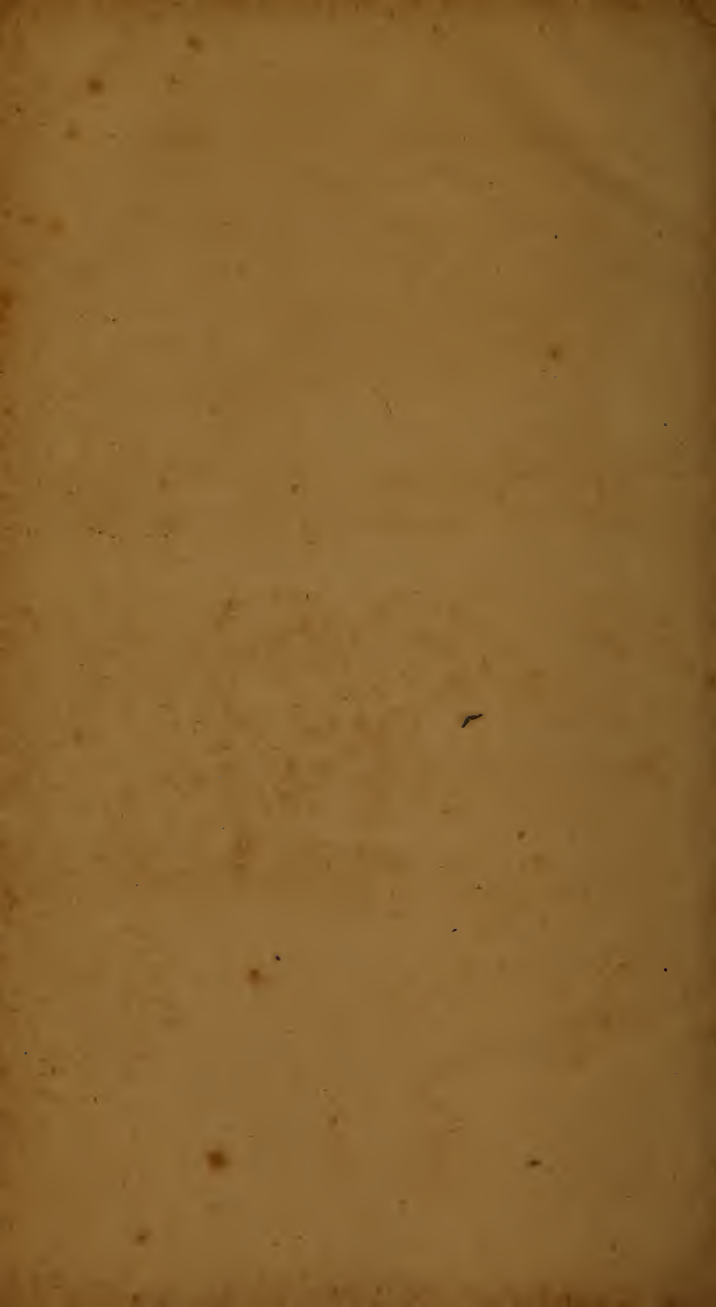
one another, but even their enemies and persecutors. From which we must learn, that all things contrary to the spirit of love, though practiced by many professing Christianity, are rather evidences that they are not His true followers, only bearing the name, but not possessing the true spirit and nature of Christianity. I have also considered, that the same prophet who was favoured to see that the Saviour's name should be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace, was also given to see, that His visage should be more marred than that of any man; which prophetic declaration appears to me, to have been abundantly verified, both in His sufferings when personally upon earth, and in the conduct of many of those, who have taken upon them His Holy name.*

JAMES BRANDWOOD.

• Written in his 84th year.









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